

to spend money on new research for alternative feedstocks for ethanol. I mean, we understand the hog growers are getting nervous because the price of corn is up. But we also believe strongly that research will enable us to use wood chips and switch grass and biomass to be able to develop the ethanol necessary to help us realize the vision outlined in this bill.

I appreciate very much the fact that we're going to fund additional research on new battery technologies to power plug-in hybrids. We're spending money on innovative ways to capture solar power. We're making—providing incentives for nuclear energy. If we're serious about making sure we grow our economy and deal with greenhouse gases, we have got to expand nuclear power.

It is going to take time to transition to this new era. And we're still going to need hydrocarbons. And I hope the Congress will continue to open access to domestic energy sources—certain parts of the Outer Continental Shelf in ANWR. And to protect us against disruptions in our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

With these steps—particularly in the bill I'm about to sign—we're going to help American consumers a lot. We'll help them by diversifying our supplies, which will help lower energy prices. We'll strengthen our security by helping to break our dependence on foreign oil. We'll do our duty to future generations by addressing climate change.

And so I thank the Members of Congress. I appreciate the fact that we've worked together, that we can show what's possible in addressing the big issues facing our Nation. This is a good bill, and I'm pleased to sign it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Department of Energy. H.R. 6, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 110–140.

Remarks on Signing a Bill To Prevent Taxation of Payments From the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund to Virginia Tech Victims and Families

December 19, 2007

It's my honor to welcome the president of Virginia Tech, the mayor of Blacksburg, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and, of course, distinguished members of the congressional delegation, here as I sign a bill that's going to help the folks who suffered mightily on that day when a gunman killed their loved ones. It's a good piece of legislation. I appreciate members from both parties working on it.

And I asked the President how—what the spirits are like there at Virginia Tech, and he said they're strong. And I'm not surprised. Having been there for that memorial ceremony, I left with the distinct impression that of all the communities in America that could deal with a tragedy, it's the Virginia Tech community.

And so I want to say to the families who still suffer, we think about you. And to the students and faculty and alumni and leadership of Virginia Tech, thank you for helping those who suffer reconcile and recover from the grief they feel. So it's my honor to sign this important piece of legislation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles W. Steger, president, Virginia Tech; Mayor Ron Rordam of Blacksburg, VA; and Governor Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia. H.R. 4118, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 110–141.

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland

December 19, 2007

The President. Admiral, thank you very much for your hospitality. You know, it's a great honor to come here. It's an honor to see the troops who have been wounded; and it's an honor to hug their families; and it's an honor to see the fabulous care that these folks receive. You know, our citizens wonder

whether or not troops in harm's way will get superb medical care. And the answer is: Absolutely; they get fantastic medical care.

Sometimes there's bureaucratic snafus that we're straightening out. But our citizens should never question whether or not the nurses and docs and caregivers are giving it their all in a professional way. They're saving lives, and they're healing hearts at the same time. And so it's a wonder what takes place here, Admiral. And I want to thank you and the Colonel for taking the lead. And you know, I'm—I know Americans join me in praising our troops and honoring their families.

Merry Christmas to you.

Rear Adm. Jeffries. Thank you, sir. It's an honor to serve them and you.

The President. Yes, sir. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:14 p.m. Participating in the visit were Rear Adm. Richard R. Jeffries, USN, commander, and Col. Leon E. Moores, USA, deputy commander for integration, National Naval Medical Center.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Adha

December 19, 2007

I send holiday greetings to all Muslims celebrating Eid al-Adha.

During Eid al-Adha, Muslims around the world reflect on Abraham's unwavering faith and his trust in God when asked to sacrifice his son. These four days are a time for Muslims to honor Abraham's obedience by celebrating with family and friends and showing gratitude for the many blessings bestowed by God. This holiday also helps ensure the important values of compassion and devotion are passed on to future generations.

America is a land of many beliefs, and our society is enriched by our Muslim citizens. The kindness, generosity, and goodwill displayed by American Muslims during this special occasion and throughout the year have contributed to the strength and vitality of our Nation. May all those observing Eid al-Adha find love and warmth during this joyous holiday.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a memorable celebration.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 8212—National Mentoring Month, 2008

December 19, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Millions of Americans lend their time, talent, and energy to become mentors and make a difference in children's lives. During National Mentoring Month, we honor these caring individuals for their dedication to changing our country one heart and soul at a time.

By sharing their knowledge and experiences, mentors serve as examples for young people and help teach them the skills they need to succeed in life. They also provide stability, instill important values, and build confidence in those they assist. Mentors are soldiers in the armies of compassion, and they encourage children to set goals and achieve their dreams.

My Administration is committed to helping our Nation's children realize their full potential by expanding opportunities for Americans to mentor. To raise awareness of the challenges facing our youth and encourage adults to connect with young people through family, school, and community, First Lady Laura Bush is leading the Helping America's Youth initiative. Through the USA Freedom Corps, we are connecting individuals with volunteer opportunities, including mentors who work with young people in schools and community organizations. By encouraging Americans to mentor, we are doing our part to see that more of America's children grow into strong, confident, and successful adults.

I appreciate all those who reach out to young people and inspire future generations to pass on this rich tradition that makes our country strong. I urge all Americans to get involved in mentoring programs and to visit